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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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Subject: "NEWS NOTES FROM THE F&DA." Information from the Federal Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today, my epicurean friends, I have a sad story to tell. A story with an unhappy ending for a certain cheese-maker who recently tried to put on the market an "Old English" cheese which, according to his advertising slogan, "tingled on the tongue."

A lot of people who read that slogan believed that the "tingle" was due to the product's advanced age. But it wasn't. The cheese-maker was in a hurry. He couldn't wait to collaborate with Old Father Time, who has his own slow methods of aging cheese. The cheese-maker did some extra-quick "aging" by mixing plenty of red pepper with his "Old English" cheese. That left a "tingle on the tongue," to be sure -- but food inspectors with the Federal Food and Drug Administration did not look upon the cheese with favor, even though it tingled.

As a matter of fact, they regarded the addition of the red pepper as an adulteration of food, and a commercial cheat. So they seized 390 packages of the tingling cheese.

That's the first item in today's report from our special correspondent with the Food and Drug Administration -- the Federal agency that protects us from adulterated foods and commercial cheats.

Now let's look at a recent "monthly report of seizures" made by the F&DA -- taking the month of June, when Food and Drug officials found it necessary to make very few seizures. Quoting our correspondent:

"Only 16 foods and 8 drug items were involved in the 72 seizure actions brought during June -- which is an unusually small number of seizures for any month. The only line of enforcement work that maintained the average of previous months was the detection of unfit cream.

"The cream campaign is now active in the West. Officials had seized and destroyed, as of July 23, a total of 1,033 gallons of dirty and decomposed cream -- intercepted on the way to creameries. They had destroyed 585 pounds of unclean butter, and seized 5,600 pounds of butter which was below the legal 80 percent butterfat requirement. Owners of this butter were required to re churn it, to remove the excessive water, before putting it on the market again.

"During June, officials rounded up 785 containers of so-called olive oil, consisting for the most part of tea-seed oil. Other economic cheats stopped by the exercise of the federal jurisdiction over interstate commerce included the

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following seizures: 1,400 pounds of dried apples containing excessive moisture; 465 cases of apricot juice adulterated with water; 928 cases of short-volume tomato juice; 854 bottles of cider vinegar deficient in acidity -- (264 bottles were also short volume); 144 bottles of short-volume olive oil; and 5,250 jars of preserves, which did not contain as much fruit as they should have."

Now let's see what other products were seized during June for violating the Food and Drug law. . . . Two hundred and fifty cases of canned asparagus were "slated for destruction," according to our reporter, "because they were unsterile and in a state of active decomposition."

Next, one lot of dried peaches -- 3,425 pounds -- seized on charges of being dirty and insect infested; 2,626 sacks of flood-damaged flour; 776 pounds of polluted crabmeat from the lower Atlantic and Gulf coast areas; and two barrels of olives contaminated with arsenic, due presumably to the use of second-hand barrels which had contained insecticides.

The next item recorded in the June report of seizures concerns 216 cans of a "chocolate flavored malted milk" which bore extravagant and misleading claims as to vitamin content and food and medicinal value.

Again, quoting today's report directly:

"A sample of a dog-and-cat food, collected and analyzed by a State food official, led to the seizure of 11,760 cans of the product on charges that the label claimed a higher fat and protein content than was actually present. Officials seized five shipments of another brand of canned pet food, involving a total of nearly 84,000 cans, when examination showed that decomposed and putrid materials had been used in preparing the food. One of these shipments was also found to be short weight."

Well, that concludes the food items seized during June. Now, let's find out about the eight drug items that found themselves in the toils of the law. Two of these items were patent medicines. "Kojene" -- spelled K-o-j-e-n-e -- was a water solution of oxy-quin-o-line sulfate and sulfur dioxide flavored with wintergreen, falsely and fraudulently represented as a treatment for pyorrhea, trench mouth, gingivitis, soft, spongy, bleeding gums, old sores, skin affections, tonsilitis, pharyngitis, most common throat infections, for relieving soreness and preventing infection.

The second patent medicine seized in June was "Bowman's Lax-tiv Pill," nothing more than a combination of plant laxatives including aloe, but bearing broad claims for the restoration of health and the prevention of disease.

The six other drug items seized included 465 cans of anaesthetic ether and 26 bottles of chloroform which had deteriorated and were no longer pure; a shipment of tincture of iodine below the legal standard for that drug; and one lot each of nitro-glycerin tablets, nicotine-kamala tablets, and carbon tetrachloride compound. Each of these products failed to meet the standard set up by its own labeling.

And so concludes today's report of food and drug seizures made by Federal officials during the month of June.

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